A

POETICAL EPISTLE

TO

THOMAS INCE, Esq;

OF CRISTLETON, NEAR CHESTER.

By S. JOHNSON, A. M.

SHREWSBURY:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY P. SANDFORD, BOOKSELLER.

MDCCLXXXVI.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
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PREFACE.

IT may ſeem a little extraordinary, that a private Epiſtle, ſo inſignificant in itſelf, ſhould be offered to the public eye. The Writer's ſole inducement is, to give the moſt unequivocal aſſurance, that all his proſpects terminate in his profeſſion——The unfortunate loſs of a very valuable Friend, at a very critical juncture, having of neceſſity ſhut up his only avenue to preferment in the Church, his devotion to his School will, if poſſible, be more earneſt and uniform than ever.

He is happy in declaring, that his employment (however irkſome it may appear to many) is by long habit far from being ſo to himſelf; and doubly happy is he in a firm confidence, that the ſame liberal-minded encouragement, which has hitherto attended, will continue to reward his labours.

The general outline of a Pluraliſt of the higher order, together

with

with a more particular one of that rara avis, nigroque ſimillima cygno, *a Pluraliſt in Curacies, require no apology. It may alſo be preſumed, that every Advocate for Humanity and Juſtice will grow warm with the Writer at the proſpect of any plan, which is likely to raiſe the Clerical Character.*

The Archbiſhop of Canterbury, *with the aſſiſtance of the Biſhops of* Cheſter *and* Llandaff, *is ſaid, at this time, to have ſuch a benevolent plan in contemplation: whether it may ſucceed or not, the effort is generous, and will certainly be attended with the fervent and grateful prayers of a very needy Multitude.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

Mr. J, takes this opportunity of giving public information, that he ſhall again offer his Boys to a ſtrict examination, at the cloſe of the year. He is particularly encouraged to this by the flattering approbation of the many reſpectable Characters, who favoured him with their attendance laſt year; and he cannot but obſerve, that the expectation of it has the beſt influence on his young Pupils, by creating among them the moſt generous emulation.

He purpoſes, in addition to the claſſical examination, to ſhow the good effect of teaching Geography by the uſe of Charts, and the outlines at leaſt of Hiſtory, and Chronology, by means of Doctor GREY's *Memoria Technica.*

An EPISTLE, &c.

Nullum numen habes, ſi ſit prudentia; ſed te
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam.———Juv.

CAUGHT by that claſſic elegance of ſtyle,
Of power to bid a feebler pen beguile,
Long ere mine eye had recognis'd your name,
My heart avow'd the hand, from whence it came:

Yet vain, my INCE, your counſel would purſue
The flattering path, that opens to my view;
Loſt is the Friend, for ever mute the tongue,
On whoſe kind accents all the Graces hung;
That Friend who ſtrove (peace to his gentle ſoul!)
For years my ſtubborn fortune to control:

Yes, when he deem'd the little boon obtain'd,
From PITT's own hand the liberal † mandate gain'd,
Accompliſh'd, high in proſpect, high in birth,
In manhood's prime Fate ſnatch'd him from the earth,
From friendſhip's warm embrace unkindly tore,
And He ſhall aſk, and I ſhall hope no more.

In vain you bid me ply the plaintive ſong,
Or in dull proſe, amid a clamorous throng,
Lay ſiege to ſome Right Honorable ear;
With fervent oriſons our young Premier
Himſelf

† Alluding to the following Letter.

To Sir CHARLTON LEIGHTON, Bart.

My dear Sir,

I am extremely ſorry, that no vacancy has yet happened, which has enabled me to urge your requeſt in favor of Mr. J——; but I beg to aſſure you, that I have every poſſible diſpoſition to promote his wiſhes; and I truſt, that an early opportunity will offer for carrying them into effect. I am, my dear Sir,

your moſt faithful

Downing-Street,
March, 15, 1784.

and moſt humble Servant,
WILLIAM PITT.

Himſelf invade, and to his noble mind
Recall the gracious *Fiat*, once deſign'd:

A cloud, ſo denſe, no hand ſhall diſſipate;
A tale, ſo plain (ſuch my obdurate fate)
No ear ſhall liſten to, no tongue ſhall tell,
For hope itſelf expir'd, when LEIGHTON fell.

In genial ſhowers tho' mitres ſhould deſcend,
No cap ſhall fit, no Biſhop ſhall befriend,
Cheriſh'd by no eccleſiaſtic rain,
PHILLIPS ſhall preach, and I ſhall pray in vain.

Farewell, ye phantoms, then, a long adieu
To Madam Fortune, and her faithleſs crew!
Hope is allied to fear;——no more her ſmile
One ſolitary moment ſhall beguile.

See the ſly Pluraliſt by night, by day
Purſue *the noiſeleſs tenor of his way*,

His

His text a bow, the comment a ſweet ſmile,
And his beſt document——conſummate guile:

Lur'd by her gold, ſo well his ſchemes are laid,
He weds ſome widow, or ſome wither'd maid,
To blaze in equipage, at vaſt expence
To revel in the luxuries of ſenſe;
While genius ſhrinks abaſh'd, hungry and dumb,
Gaſping to catch the hallow'd table-crumb,
With lazy ſtate gay coronets among,
In chariot blazon'd high he rolls along;
Of ſpirit meek, with finger undefil'd
Rich benefice on benefice is pil'd,
Nor ſcorn'd (a pretty ſupplement to all)
The Curacy commodious, tho' but ſmall:
Deſire inflam'd, as he augments his ſtore,
The man of God ſtill hungers after more;
The true Apoſtle ſhall obtain it too,
And realize the moſt licentious view.

There

There is, You'll ſcarcely credit me, when told,
A ſon of BELIAL too, whoſe God is gold,
Deſpairing to achieve the ſovereign game,
At which ſuperior ſpirits devoutly aim,
Yet knowing well, in worldly matters wiſe,
Molehills on molehills heap'd to mountains riſe,
A PLURALIST in Curacies——Saint JOHN
Had ſeven you know——but he neglected none;
While this Divine, the Peter-pence to earn
Diſpatches round a needy ſubaltern,
And while he ſpurns the vaſſal to the wall,
Himſelf denounces Curate GENERAL;
By proxy prays, or prays in ſuch a ſort,
The coarſeſt clodpole does not thank him for't;
By proxy preaches——half the ſtipend given;
By proxy too may gain a ſeat in heaven.

For ſuch low merits a ſublime reward,
Yon triple Tree preſents the pendent cord

With kind embrace to circle round his nape,
While plunderers of provinces eſcape.

O ALMA MATER!——and is this thy Son?
Can in ſuch tainted veins thy ſweet milk run?
But I forbear——no more indignant rage
With ſuch a vile *contour* ſhall ſtain my page.

Yet there are Prieſts, of that untoward kind,
To worldly views ſo very, very blind,
They ſcorn to bend a temporizing knee
To win a Monarch's ſmile, or filch a See;
Curates for life, predeſtin'd ne'er to riſe,
Till the proud ſoul more abject talents tries:

Should ſome kind hand, ſome heart of generous birth,
Or touch'd with pity, or ſubdu'd by worth,
Bring (paſt expectance) Fortune's gilded cup,
And graciouſly command one little ſup;

I' th' moment, while alternate ardors glow,
Malignant Chance ſhall point ſome deadly blow,
And, ere their thirſt one drop delicious ſips,
Daſh the bright chalice from their quiv'ring lips.

Evils, like theſe, of ſuch eſtabliſh'd growth,
On Luxury's hot bed rais'd by Pride and Sloth,
To root entirely, or in part control,
Aſk the ſtrong arm, pure heart, and patriot-ſoul.

Unaw'd by power, to ſtand forth Merit's friend,
In ſteady equilibrium to ſuſpend
The weighty ſcale of Juſtice——to unfold
The code divine, whoſe every leaf is gold;
However hateful to a venal Court
To plead Religion's cauſe, her ſons ſupport,
To fix her foot on Virtue's ſolid baſe,
To its black fount Corruption's ſtream to trace,
With large and liberal mind exert a pen,
That charms, informs, protects the ſons of Men,

With

With majeſty to wield the paſtoral wand,
To ſhower down bleſſings on a grateful land,
To rule our Rulers with reſiſtleſs ſway,
PORTEUS ſhall riſe, and WATSON lead the way.

Touch'd by the God, that made me, more delight
Breaks on my ſoul beneath the ſhade of night,
Than if my name to all the world was known,
Puſh'd into day——a DIGNITARY-DRONE,
To think, that Time may yet mature the plan,
When every Prieſt, ſhall feel himſelf a Man;
Firm, ſelf advanc'd, and independant ſtand
To grace, inſtruct, and bleſs th' enlightened Land;
Diſgrac'd with rags no more depreſs'd Deſert,
No ſcurvy jeſt ſhall bald-head Prophets hurt;
Nor, while their hearts with holy fervor burn,
Denied the morſel, which their labors earn;
Salvation's heralds ſhall with joy be heard;
The Preacher honor'd, and obey'd the Word.

EQUALITY,

EQUALITY, a plant of lovely hue,
Diſguſtful only to a ſordid few,
Shall nouriſh thouſands——thouſands ſtarv'd before,
With ev'ry ſublunary torment ſore,
Shall riſe up Rectors, and yet not aſpire
To meaſure might, or malice with a 'Squire.

The thrifty Hind, while Juſtice guards his door,
His toil repaid, his property ſecure,
No more ſhall dread the hungry Tythe-man's ſearch,
Nor, while he pays the Parſon, curſe the Church.

Health to the ſick, and viſion to the blind,
Where is that eſſence of a Chriſtian mind,
* Who bade the Sabbath with primeval power
On all mankind eternal bleſſings ſhower,
To ſtrangle vices in their very birth,
And drop the dew of praiſe on infant worth?

* Mr. RAIKES of GLOUCESTER, who firſt introduced the excellent eſtabliſhment of Sunday-Schools, which, it is to be hoped, will become general.

A plan, ſo pure, ſhall be a Nation's care;
The Heart, who drew it, Honor's choſen heir;
And, when he falls, as fall, alas! he muſt,
And mingle too with more ignoble duſt,
Each well-taught Child with many a drop ſincere,
And thankful Parent ſhall bedew his bier:
Time ſhall enrol him on the liſt of Fame,
And Innocents unborn hereafter bleſs his name.

Where too is HOWARD? Does he ſtill purſue,
Led by Humanity's unwearied clew,
The dying Convict to his dark abode;
Unfelt, unfear'd the perils of the road?
Sure ſome kind Seraph on his ſtep attends,
And o'er his head a guardian wing extends!
A grateful column ſhall his Country raiſe;
A proud one HAYLEY in immortal lays.

Theſe are imperial works,——and thro' the ſkies
Into the heaven of heavens their odours riſe:

While

While ſuch exertions cheer a drooping Land,
Firm on her ſnowy rocks ſhall BRITAIN ſtand.

Perhaps not diſtant far the time, when all,
Who cloiſtered * graze, or ſlumber in a ſtall,
No future ſchemes of indolence ſhall forge,
But every ſuperfluity diſgorge.

Then Genius ſhall walk forth, whoſe open front
Bears every character of worth upon't,
To animating honors legal heir,
Which now too many ſervile blockheads ſhare.

Then ſhall my ‡ Boy, (well knows my generous Friend
What anxious hopes a Parent's boſom rend)

My

* This degrading expreſſion cannot point at the many illuſtrious Characters, which adorn both Univerſities; but at ſuch only, who *fruges conſumere nati*, ſeem literally to merit the fate of Nebuchadnezzar.

‡ *Omnis in Aſcanio cari ſtat cura parentis.* Virg.

My playful Boy, in whoſe ingenuous breaſt,
By Heaven's all gracious finger deep impreſt,
The gem ethereal ſparkles——riſe to Fame,
And reſcue from the duſt a Father's name:

And Oh,——if haply, at ſome diſtant time,
His eye ſhall glance on this forgotten rhyme,
While youth beats ardent, the paternal lore
Shall ſtrike his heart from lips, that breathe no more,
On rock of adamant confirm his feet;
Tho' poor, yet honeſt; and if honeſt, great!
So ſhall he drink——(Oh, might I live to ſee!)
At Freedom's hallow'd fount,——denied to me.

Then urge not, INCE, the path my foot eſchews;
But hear the whimſeys of a wayward Muſe.

'Twas ſilent midnight,——when in broad array
Truth marſhals all the follies of the day,

When

When Life's poor pageantries no more impoſe,
The ſemblance of a Brother Curate roſe:
Unfortunate EUGENIO——hard his lot!
Alive, unnotic'd; and deceas'd, forgot!
He fell, by chilling diſappointment hurt,
No claim to riſe,——but——infinite deſert;
While many a Dunce he ſaw by ſervile means
Fat Rectors, Prebends, and inſatiate Deans:

Hapleſs EUGENIO! once the ſoul of whim,
Now penſive, pale——alas, how chang'd from him,
Whoſe poignancy of talents (now no more)
Was wont to ſet the table in a roar!
Yet his eye flaſh'd ſarcaſtic humor, while
Athwart his features gleam'd an April ſmile;
And the big tear roll'd down his viſage wan,
As thus in meaſure quaint his precepts ran:

" PRITHEE, graſp at toys no more!
" Quit a Verſeman's idle aim!

" When a few ſhort years are o'er,
" What will be thy boaſted Fame?
" Thy toils in diſappointment end,
" Nor time, nor place the proſpect mend;
" Go, clear thy looks!
" Be gay! gadzooks,
" Throw to the dogs thy trumpery books,
" And court ſincerer Friends!

" Reputation is a bubble,
" All the wiſe without it live;
" Gold can baniſh ev'ry trouble,
" Ev'ry ſatisfaction give;
" Then chooſe a Patron ſoft, and ſweet,
" Deep in his pocket take thy ſeat;
" Ah, ſhould he ſmile,
" Wrapt up in guile,
" Down, like a ſpaniel, cringe the while,
" And lick his Honor's feet!

" Cultivate

" Cultivate no hidden grace;
" Never ſtart at hidden wrong;
" Limit knowledge to the face;
" Tie up feeling to the tongue:
" See how † ACANTHUS climbs apart!
" Oh, Maſter of each bleſſed art,
" For he knows how
" To make a bow,
" And wear the Dove upon his brow,
" The Serpent at his heart!

" Falſe, and fawning from his birth,
" How little is he known!
" Void of ev'ry thing on earth,
" That Virtue calls her own:
" He laughs at Honor's flimſy ties;
" Wrapt in Religion's ſafe diſguiſe,

" Do

† In this outline the Writer entirely diſclaims every perſonal idea; and, however juſt it may be, ſincerely hopes, that it will not bring to the mind of his Reader the leaſt feature of any *Reverend* Character of his acquaintance.

" Do what he will,

" He's righteous ſtill,

" And only wants one trick—i. e. to kill

" The worm, that never dies.

" Long, too long neglected laid,

" Baniſh'd from the beam of day,

" Through oblivion's chilling ſhade

" Dares thy fancy force its way,

" With envy ſee the Miſcreant ſtart!

" No rapture warms his frozen heart;

" He cannot glow,

" Nor does he know

" To ſympathize with bleeding wo,

" Nor ſhare the dying ſmart:

" Hunger's piercing accent fails

" To moleſt his ſweet repoſe:

" Widows tears, and Orphans tales——

" What has he to do with thoſe?

" For

" For *ſelf* alone he feels——and yet
" His REVERENCE ſhall preferment get,
" While Thou and I
" His ſlaves ſtand by,
" And hear our little infants cry
" For want of bread to eat."

Reſt, reſt, perturbed, friendly Spirit, reſt!
Indignant, as thy own, my thoughts deteſt
The beaten road to Adulation's ſhrine;
Nor, for a mitre, would I make it mine.

Yet to Religion I devote my days,
And my beſt powers her hallowed name ſhall raiſe;
A cheerful Veteran in her cauſe I'll toil,
Nor ſhun the fight, tho' others claim the ſpoil.

Train'd to an arduous life——touch'd with that fire,
Which mark'd the honor'd footſteps of my Sire,
Already do I reach the diſtant goal,
The glorious prize, ſo grateful to my ſoul,

With honeſt pride in fancy ſeem to ſeize;
And win my way to affluence, and to eaſe.

Even now, in Life's meridian, while I glow
To fill the various duties, that I owe,
And my beſt ſpirits liberally employ
To faſhion future manhood in the Boy,
Through Time's dark veil my prouder hopes ſurvey
The dear indulgence of ſome diſtant day,
When the long race of Labour fairly run,
And the ſweet prize of Independence won,
Its powers impaired, yet with affection bland
My wearied Soul ſhall gratefully expand;
With no dark clouds the future overcaſt,
Shall bleſs the preſent, while it views the paſt:
Back to that ſacred hour my thoughts ſhall bend,
Which fix'd, beyond my hopes, a § STOCK my friend:

Dear

§ The Rev. Doctor STOCK of IRELAND, a Gentleman well known to the learned world by his elegant editions of ſeveral of the higher Claſſics.

Dear, honor'd Name! the glory of my rhyme,
Who bid'ſt me dare anticipate the time,
When thoſe ſweet Lads, to honeſt triumph led,
Nurs'd on our knees, and in our boſom fed,
Shall with a gallant energy aſpire
To emulate the merits of their Sire;
Shall grace their Country, its beſt honors ſhare,
Support the pulpit, and adorn the bar:
Delightful thought!——when each beloved name,
Borne on the pinions of a generous Fame,
Shall from HIBERNIA's friendly coaſt invade
Mine aged ear in calm retirement's ſhade:
" Theſe are the Men, ſo worthy, ſo rever'd,
" Thy precepts form'd, thy care paternal rear'd!"
More cordial comfort ſhall the tidings yield,
Than ever Hero felt on foughten field:
Proud, as a Monarch on the loftieſt throne,
The victory won, the empire all my own.

Then welcome, honeſt Labour! Sweet the toil,
That meliorates the kind, and grateful ſoil;
Sweet the reward, delicious to the ſenſe,
Tho' won at life's and liberty's expence,
When Pride unflattered, Greatneſs unador'd,
By dint of powers, which Nature's gifts afford,
The vigorous mind, in ſpite of place or times,
By native ſtrength to independence climbs;
Throws off the ſhackles of corroding care,
And in the arms of peace breathes freedom's fragrant air.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 8, *line* 7, was *read* were.
——————— 11 independant *read* independent.
— 14, — 8, ſincerer friends *read* a truer friend.